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“And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon: of shittim wood shalt thou make it. A cubit shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof; foursquare shall it be: and two cubits shall be the height thereof: the horns thereof shall be the same. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, the top thereof, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns thereof; and thou shalt make unto it a crown of gold round about. And two golden rings shalt thou make to it under the crown of it, by the corners thereof, upon the two sides of it shalt thou make it; and they shall be for places for the staves to bear it withal. And thou shalt make the staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. And thou shalt put it before the veil that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee. And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations. Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering; neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon. And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the LORD.”

Ex.30: 1-10.

The fifth furniture in the typical sanctuary is the golden altar of incense. There are two altars in the entire tabernacle worship; the very first furniture is the brazen altar - altar of wood covered with brass. The second altar is this fifth furniture, itself an altar of wood but covered with gold. The variation in the coverings of the two altars shows a spiritual progression. The two altars being wood indicate that man is central in the picture. The man relates to fire and to brass on the first altar; he relates to fire and gold on the second altar. In general, altars give a message of offerings and sacrifices. On the brazen altar on the outer court, man has nothing useful to offer to God; he has the skin, the bowels, the dung that are a type of the carnal, fleshly and the sin nature. On the brazen altar, the man's flesh and sin nature are judged. Said in another way, he is being divested of his own righteousness and his sin nature. On the second altar, which is the fifth furniture, the golden altar of incense, it is expected that the man's fleshly activities had died and ceased to be. What the man has next to offer is his soul that he gives over to be burnt in a free will offering. The implication is this; in the soul of man are four compartments. These compartments are pictured in the scriptures as four wild beasts. They are symbolically represented as the face of an **“eagle”**, a **“lion”** an **“ox”** and a **“man”**. Besides the wild attributes of these compartments, all of the goodness of the natural man are also resident in the soul. All these goodness of man in his soul realm are expected to become as incense for burning with the result that highest glory is brought to the Almighty God.

The fifth furniture is therefore the point at which, a man surrenders all of his soul's **“goodness”** to God. At this point all souliness must die. All **“spiritual gifts”** must be submitted to God and not to be used at will neither can we again capitalize on our **“gifts”** whether of healing or of faith or of any other even, the **“best gift”** for Paul admonished for us to covet the best gift. Having

obtained the best gift, it must but be surrendered back to God realising that the gifts are given to the church and not to individuals; individuals are but stewards only, of the gifts. It is for the edification of the church only but never for our use as we wish. When the soul life has died on the golden altar of incense, we get to terms with **“not my will but thine be done”**. This is why as a beloved brother wrote, **“Jesus went down to the pool of Bethesda where there were many sick folk, but he healed one and went away because that was the will of the Father for the time. Many of us would have put up a tent and hold a big revival meeting right there on the spot”**

The altar of wood but covered with gold and not with brass! The signification is this. When we arrive at this point in a spiritual progression, in a consistent walk with God to the point of willingly offering our soul nature to God; at a point when and where we are only mindful of His glory alone, the divine nature and attributes symbolised by gold must have significantly been worked into the soul. The soul nature is now substantially changed because the **“wild beasts”** have substantially been tamed. The results are seen in divine character formation that manifests in spiritual fruits. In such an environment, a man does not capitalize on **“his gifts”** but on Christ. At such a point in spiritual walk, a man **“treads carefully”** as to be sure there is nothing he does which robs God of the glory that rightly belongs to Him. A man at this point is extremely careful not to burn strange incense or offer strange offering before the Lord. **THIS IS THE PLACE WHERE MANY MIGHTY MEN OF FAITH HAVE EITHER DIED LITERALLY OR SPIRITUALLY.** It is a very dangerous point in spiritual progression. This is because; a man will have crossed two symbolic veils to get to this point. He has only one more veil to cross beyond this point. It was at this point that Nadab and Abihu, two priests of God and sons of Aaron died in one day. This is because as one said, **“they transgressed basic principles and became the victims of their own folly”**

When a man is so yielded to God in a daily walk in the Spirit, spiritual progression will bring him to the point of this fifth furniture. A grace is available to him at this point such that he no longer sins in his mind, with his emotions, his will or his desires. The self-life by now is virtually gone. Nothing done here is to be motivated by self. No benefit is to accrue to self at this point of spiritual experience. There is no cause for self-defence or self-preservation. Every motive is now God and Him alone: God’s plan, God’s will, God’s people. At this point, it becomes nothing to us if we labour to achieve and another takes the glory. It matters nothing if another lays claim to that which is legitimately ours. We can be cheated, maltreated or humiliated yet without fighting back, all because the glory of God is in view. Our decrease can only mean His increase. If we increase, then Christ decreases. But if we decrease, then He will increase. Putting this in John’s words, **“He must increase, but I must decrease”** John 3:30. The fact of the matter is the **“I”** **“I”** is a god. It is anti-Christ. It is an ego. He wants recognition accorded it. It wants fame. It calls for self-glory. He is happy when good things are said about him: **“a popular man of God”** or **“a great servant of God”** or **“a man that God is using mightily”**. You know the **“accolades”** that usually precede **“the man of God”** as he is invited to the pulpit. How many great places he has visited; how many great audiences to which he has spoken; how many great international meetings to which he has been and all that. All that we are doing at such instances is help to destroy the supposed to be humble servant of God. We are not helping matters. We are helping to destroy a soul fast. The **“I”** of the soul man is being helped to increase. Each time the man is made to increase, larger than himself, the Christ is made to decrease. Our need is not to

see the man but to see Jesus. If you see man, you are transformed and changed to the image and the likeness of the man you see. But if you see Jesus, you are changed to His image and likeness. What does it avail you if you succeed to speak exactly like a great man of God speaks and pray like he prays and gesticulate like he does; nothing except that you increase foolishness to yourself. The scripture took account of certain Greeks who came to Philip and then to Andrew. This set of innocent seekers spoke plainly. They loved the disciples of Jesus, John 8:20-21. They acknowledged them but they insisted, **“sir, we would see Jesus”**. The options were there. Whoever met Philip would have touched Jesus in measure. After all it was the same Philip that experienced a bodily translation after having spoken with the Ethiopian Eunuch, Acts 8:39-40. To stop at seeing Philip or even Philip combined with Andrew could have been sufficient spiritual experience for these humble Greeks. Nay, they insisted, **“SIR, WE WOULD SEE JESUS”**. This is because, it is Jesus who is **“the author and finisher (perfecter) of our faith”** Heb 12:2. We must look unto this Jesus and no other. We are not to set a man as our model; we will never rise higher than such a man in the things of God. It was true that Paul said, **“I beseech you, be ye followers of me... be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ”**, I Cor.4: 16; 11:1. He was not canvassing for men to imitate his person; rather, the issue is to be diligent in following Christ as I am; to follow the principles that I am also following. If Paul was encouraging us to imitate him the way many enjoy being imitated, then, we will be changed to the image and likeness of Paul. Paul was a pattern disciple, nonetheless he said, **“every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? WAS PAUL CRUCIFIED FOR YOU? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?”** We are not to follow men but Christ irrespective of their placement in God. In this way, we will help them and help ourselves.

On the golden altar are four horns covered with gold and crowns of gold adorn the altar round about. The horns symbolize force, compulsion, power, authority and victory. The force and compulsion so symbolized speak of the necessity for complete submission to the will of God in one last compulsory act to facilitate the crossing of the final veil of the flesh. The requirement for man at this point is to surrender all spiritual attainments and achievements in Christ to God. The way to attaining to the fullness of life in Christ is the way of a willing surrender of all we are or can be; all we have or can have. The grain of wheat must fall to the ground and die so that it can bring forth more grains. The law of life is in death. To live is to die.

The combination of the golden crowns and the horns covered with gold is to suggest the place of kingly authority and power that are surrendered to God. The golden altar of incense is the height of instructed consecration; this kind of consecrated living brings power and authority. When we receive both the authority and the power, we surrender them back to the Giver in willing adoration. This is the picture painted for us in Revelation 4 verse 10, **“the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power...”** The fact is that these **“elders”** have come to the place of having crowns, glory, honour, and power. However, they stood off their thrones, removed their crowns, stripped themselves of their glory, honour and power and laid them before the feet of him to who belong glory, honour and power forever. This was a willing surrender, henceforth to administer governmental rule and authority that only flows from the cross; in the heart of God. When some supposed to be servants of God find it a fun to readily **“curse”** any for whom Christ has died, or even have sufficient power to threaten to **“curse”** a sheep in the sheep-fold, it is

because, he is a “**lord**”, a “**master**”, a “**king**” on his “**throne**” and not a “**servant**”. A true servant has come to terms with this fifth furniture where he has willingly surrendered all rule and all authority unto him who has all rule and authority.

There are two golden rings at two opposite corners of the golden altar. This doubly emphasises the relationship; between us as a bride and Christ as the groom. In marriage, one rings seals the engagement rites and the other seals the marriage rites. At this point, it is either “**for better or for worse**” it is now a matter of “**if I perish, I perish**” It is, no going back: the cross before me, and the world behind me. It is at this point that we lay our hands on the plough and refuse to look back any longer for he who looks back after having laid his hands on the plough is not fit for the kingdom. The two rings are also a witness to the word and to the Spirit. It reveals the necessity for us to become one with both the word and the Spirit. The rings provide the means of lifting the altar by the use of a staff. If only one ring is provided, balance is lost. No one can stand on one leg and be stable. No one can walk perfect; leaning only on the word neither can any lean only on the Spirit. There must be a balance between the word and the Spirit. Whatever the word says, it must be confirmed by the Spirit. Whatever is received from the Spirit must be found in the word. “**To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them**”, Is. 8:20. The elder that spoke with John in the Book of Revelation said, “**the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy**” Rev 19:10. The law testifies of the Word. The testimony relates to the Spirit. The Lord speaking to his disciples said, “**every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is an house holder which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old**” Mt.13: 52. As every truth of God’s purpose must be confirmed in both the old and the New Testament so must every truth be confirmed by both the word and the Spirit for a witness of the truth so that it can be said, “**in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established**” Mt 18:16; II Cor.13: 1.